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To: House Public Education Committee, Chairman Huberty and Vice Chairman Bernal
Re: Request for Information, Interim Charge 1, Question 1

Chairman Huberty, Vice Chairman Bernal, and members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to your request for information on Interim Charge 1:
*Can the state delay implementation of the teacher incentive pay program to push it out to the next biennium?
If so, what would be the impact on the current budget, as well as budget implications for the 2022-23
biennium?*

Before moving to Dallas in 2015, I taught 6th and 7th grade ELAR and Science in Killeen, TX supporting military students and their families in Killeen ISD. With Killeen being such a transient city due to numerous deployments and unit changes, 1st year teachers made only \$40,000 annually, with me at year 3 making \$42,000. I began my first year of teaching in Dallas ISD at “The” Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy and immediately increased my salary to \$50,000. With the help of the district’s Teacher Excellence Initiative (the system the Teacher Incentive Allotment is based upon), I am now, in under 4 years, making \$70,000. During that time, I dug deep to understand and play a pivotal role in drastically improving student outcomes using the district’s unique approach to teacher compensation. Now, **with the Legislature’s passage of the Teacher Incentive Allotment, school systems around the state can implement similar systems that emphasize great teaching and equitable distribution of top tier teachers in our lowest performing and hardest-to-staff schools.**

Most teachers I know truly value the experience they have educating students who are experiencing poverty. It’s no secret how imperative it is to close learning gaps and improve student outcomes, especially for our most vulnerable students of color, and it is refreshing to know the Legislature is rewarding the extra work that goes into tailoring instruction for students with higher needs. However, most high-poverty schools cannot attract and retain highly qualified teachers. **This is why the legislature must continue funding, without delay, the Teacher Incentive Allotment: it allows teachers to provide students with the best education possible while earning a highly competitive salary.**

My previous boss, Dallas ISD’s former award-winning principal, Mr. Douglas, was known for checking in with his staff on their social and emotional well-being. We often heard him say, when asked why he was so intentional, “If you don’t feed the teachers, they’ll eat the kids.” **What’s the answer to greatly improving outcomes for our schools, communities and futures? Invest in teachers.** Especially now during the height of Covid-19 while students and staff are matriculating back to campuses to ensure the closing of all academic gaps that we know is present from the lack of structured education during the spring. The Texas Legislature MUST continue funding the allotment, in its entirety. Anything else does not serve as an equitable and just solution to Texas students and teachers.

Our students’ success depends on the long-term commitment made to Texas teachers and school systems by the Legislature. **Any deferment which halts incentivizing the best teachers across the state**

demonstrates a lack of honor and trust. Please maintain the full funding for the Teacher Incentive Allotment and without any delay.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,

Sakennia C. Reed, Exemplary Teacher